



## Census Bureau

### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Special Census Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of information collection; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment on the proposed reinstatement, with change, of the Special Census Program, prior to the submission of the information collection request (ICR) to OMB for approval.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by email to [dcmd.special.census@census.gov](mailto:dcmd.special.census@census.gov). Please reference Special Census Program in the subject line of your comments. You may also submit comments, identified by Docket Number USBC-2022-0009 to the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record. No comments will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> for public viewing until after the comment period has closed. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Christine Borman, Chief, Nonresponse Operations Branch, Decennial Census Management Division, 301-763-4315, and Christine.Flanagan.Borman@census.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*I. Abstract*

A Special Census is an enumeration of population, housing units, group quarters, and transitory locations, conducted by the Census Bureau at the request of a Governmental Unit (GU). The Special Census questionnaires will collect the same information that was gathered during the 2020 Census. Title 13, United States Code, Section 196 authorizes the Census Bureau to conduct Special Censuses on a cost reimbursable basis for the government of any state, county, city, or other political subdivision within a state. This includes the District of Columbia, American Indian Reservations, Alaskan Native villages, Puerto Rico, the Island Areas (e.g. American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and other governmental units that require current population data between decennial censuses. Local officials frequently request a Special Census when there has been a significant population change in their community due to annexation, growth, or the addition of new group quarters facilities. Communities may also consider a Special Census if there was a significant number of vacant housing units during the previous Decennial Census that are now occupied.

A full Special Census is a basic enumeration of population, housing units, and group quarters for the entire area within the jurisdiction of a local GU requesting the Special Census. A partial Special Census is conducted using the same methodologies and procedures as a regular or full Special Census, but it is for an area or section within the jurisdiction of the local GU. For example, GUs may choose to conduct a partial Special Census for just those areas that might have experienced a large population growth or a boundary change.

Many states use Special Census population statistics to determine the distribution of state funds to local jurisdictions. The local jurisdictions may also use the data to plan new schools, transportation systems, housing programs, or water treatment facilities. GUs that request a Special Census will receive the data files containing housing unit and population counts by email when data processing and disclosure avoidance have been completed for the Special Census. The data will also be posted at [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov) for public use. These data will not be used to update official 2020 Census data products and apportionment counts, but they will be used to update data in the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program.

The Census Bureau is requesting a reinstatement of the Special Census Program with change. For this Special Census Program, the Census Bureau will use an internet self-response instrument, which is the online tool through which respondents can answer their Special Census. The Census Bureau will also conduct fieldwork to perform listing and enumeration at housing units, group quarters, and transitory locations using a paper collection mode. As stated above, the Special Census questionnaires will collect the same information that was gathered during the 2020 Census.

The Special Census Program will accept requests for cost estimates from GUs starting in March 2023 and will start data collection no sooner than January 2024. A Request for Cost Estimate form (SC-900 RCE) will be available on the Census Bureau website by February 2023. There is a fee to submit a request form. GUs will submit this form to the Census Bureau along with the fee associated with making the request. Once this form has been reviewed by the Census Bureau, the GU and the Census Bureau will coordinate to identify the exact geographic boundaries for the Special Census. Then the Special Census Program will coordinate with the Census Bureau's regional offices to determine a cost estimate and timeline for the Special Census and will present them to the GU. The cost of a Special Census varies depending on the GU's housing and population counts and whether a government requests a full or partial Special Census. The cost estimate outlines the anticipated costs to the sponsoring government for

staffing, materials, data processing and tabulation. Included with the cost estimate is a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Once a signed MOA and initial payment are transmitted to the Census Bureau, the Special Census process will begin. When data collection, processing, disclosure avoidance, and tabulation have been completed, the GU will receive official census statistics on the population and housing unit counts for the entire jurisdiction or parts of the jurisdiction, as defined in the MOA at the beginning of the Special Census process. All Special Census statistics will be subject to disclosure avoidance using differential privacy methods, consistent with the processes and methods used for 2020 Census data products, prior to their release to the public. Requests for cost estimates from GUs will be accepted through May 2027.

## *II. Method of Collection*

The Census Bureau plans to use an internet self-response instrument for respondents to respond online to the Special Census questionnaire. Respondents will have a number of weeks to respond to the Special Census questionnaire using the internet self-response instrument. At the start of the Special Census, the Census Bureau will send an invitation letter to housing units in the GU's Special Census area with information needed to respond online. Reminder letters and postcards will be sent to each housing unit to encourage self-response and provide information needed to do so.

Approximately two weeks after the end of the Special Census self-response period, the Census Bureau will conduct follow-up operations in the field to enumerate housing units that did not respond using the internet self-response instrument. Housing units that do not respond online will be contacted by a field representative who will conduct a Special Census interview using a paper questionnaire. The field operations will also enumerate group quarters and transitory locations in the GU's Special Census area. The Census Bureau plans to use a paper questionnaire to conduct Special Census interviews at transitory locations and group quarters. During the field operations, Special Census field representatives will also update the addresses of living quarters as needed, based on their observation of housing units, transitory locations, and group quarters.

Several quality assurance measures will be implemented for each Special Census to ensure that high quality data are gathered using the most efficient and cost-effective procedures. These include edits incorporated into the online questionnaire and the ability to validate potentially erroneous responses in the field. Independent quality assurance checks and reinterview of a sample of field questionnaires will also be implemented to ensure the quality of the data collected in the field.

As the Census Bureau develops automated tools and methods for data collection and listing for the 2030 Decennial Census, the Special Census Program may incorporate this additional automation throughout the decade. Updates to the operational design will be implemented no earlier than 2026. The incorporation of additional automation may increase data collection quality and efficiency, resulting in a cost savings for GUs, but the extent of those cost savings is currently unknown.

### *III. Data*

*OMB Control Number:* 0607-0368.

*Form Number(s):* SC-Q, SC-CQ, SC-Q-TL, SC-CQ-TL, SC-Q-GE, SC-RQ, SC-900 RCE.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission, Request for a Reinstatement, with Change, of a Previously Approved Collection.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; State, Local, or Tribal government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 340,000.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* approximately 10 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 56,667.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$0. (This is not the cost of respondents' time, but the indirect costs respondents may incur for such things as purchases of specialized software or hardware needed to report, or expenditures for accounting or records maintenance services required specifically by the collection.)

*Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.*

*Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C. Section 196.*

*IV. Request for Comments*

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include, or summarize, each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer,*

*Office of the Chief Information Officer,*

*Commerce Department.*

